

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for operating an apparatus having parental controls, comprising steps of:

providing access to the parental controls of the apparatus;

determining whether at least one setting of the parental controls is changed during the access; and

providing a notification to a user when at least one setting of the parental controls is changed during the access.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the notification is provided to the user via an electronic mail message.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the electronic mail message is sent to a predetermined electronic mail address which can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the notification is provided via a message stored in a memory of the apparatus which is retrievable by the user.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the notification indicates a date when the at least one setting of the parental controls is changed.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the date indicated in the notification can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the notification indicates a time when the at least one setting of the parental controls is changed.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the time indicated in the notification can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the access to the parental controls of the apparatus is provided in response to a password input.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprised of providing a second notification to the user in response to a predetermined number of invalid password input attempts.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the second notification is provided to the user via an electronic mail message.

12. An apparatus having parental controls, comprising:
an input terminal for receiving an input requesting access to the parental controls of the apparatus; and

a processor for providing the access to the parental controls in response to the input, determining whether at least one setting of the parental controls is changed during the access, and providing a notification to a user when at least one setting of the parental controls is changed during the access.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the notification is provided to the user via an electronic mail message.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the electronic mail message is sent to a predetermined electronic mail address which can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a memory, wherein the notification is provided via a message stored in the memory which is retrievable by the user.

16. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the notification indicates a date when the at least one setting of the parental controls is changed.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the date indicated in the notification can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

18. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the notification indicates a time when the at least one setting of the parental controls is changed.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the time indicated in the notification can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

20. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the input requesting the access to the parental controls is a password.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the processor provides a second notification to the user in response to a predetermined number of invalid password input attempts.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the second notification is provided to the user via an electronic mail message.

23. A method for operating an apparatus having parental controls, comprising steps of:

detecting when a rating level corresponding to a reproduction exceeds a rating level corresponding to a parental control setting; and

providing a notification to a user without blocking the reproduction when the rating level corresponding to the reproduction exceeds the rating level corresponding to the parental control setting.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the notification is provided to the user via an electronic mail message.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the electronic mail message is sent to a predetermined electronic mail address which can not be changed through access to the parental controls.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the notification is provided via a message stored in a memory of the apparatus which is retrievable by the user.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein the reproduction is a television program.